

Mobbing in Banks: The Role of Gender and Position on the Process of Mobbing in Banks in Poland and Russia

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Jerzy Kaźmierczyk¹, Daria Figas², Maria Akulich³, Ireneusz Jaźwiński⁴

Abstract:

Purpose: The main purpose of this paper is to determine the scale of mobbing in banks, in particular we seek to investigate who is the most frequently a mobber and who is most often affected by mobbing.

Approach/Methodology/Design: English and Polish literature from EBSCO, ProQuest, and Emerald databases were used to write the article. The methods that were used for the study were classification trees, the Mann-Whitney test, and descriptive statistics.

Findings: This paper presents the results of an empirical study of bank employees in Poland and Russia. The following hypotheses were adopted: 1. Superiors are more likely to be perpetrators of mobbing than employees at the same organizational structure level. 2. Women more often than men report that they are victims of mobbing. Both hypotheses were disconfirmed in the research. Indeed, it turned out that employees at a similar level were more likely to be guilty of mobbing and that men were more often victims of mobbing.

Practical Implications: The phenomenon of mobbing is poorly understood, especially in banks. We managed to identify the groups most exposed to mobbing. In these groups, anti-mobbing prevention should be implemented first.

Originality/Value: Banks are very reluctant to undertake any research cooperation. The obtained results shed new light on who is being mobbed in general and who is being mobbed in financial institutions. The contribution of this paper is also to propose a mobbing index, which takes into account not only the frequency of mobbing but also its quality aspects, i.e., the various types of mobbing.

Keywords: Mobbing, human capital, comparative studies, gender in employment, position in employment, banks.

JEL Classification: M5, N30, O15.

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¹Poznan University of Economics and Business, Department of Education and Personnel Development, jerzy.kazmierczyk@ue.poznan.pl;

²Independent researcher, figasdaria@gmail.com ;

³Tyumen State University, Financial and Economic Institute, akulich.m@gmail.com,

⁴University of Szczecin, Department of Socio-Economic Policy, ireneusz.jazwinski@usz.edu.pl;

1. Introduction

Mobbing may have detrimental effects on its intended target. A persecuted person may have problems with concentration and uncertainty, and thus his/her life, and work satisfaction will decrease. Happiness, peace, and self-satisfaction may be replaced by symptoms of anxiety, depression, alienation, fatigue, and fear. In the most severe cases, people affected by mobbing may experience stress levels like those suffering from post-traumatic stress, the type that is suffered by survivors of accidents and disasters.

All these problems are also reflected in a person's work environment and work efficiency. Mobbed employees are less productive (Jaźwiński, 2017). Other employees who observe mobbing at their workplaces may also feel certain negative consequences. The social order at work is often damaged. This can be compared to the phenomenon of codependence when non-addicted people from an addict's environment show symptoms like the addicted person. In the case of mobbing, other employees may be afraid that they could also be the next victim of mobbing, which is clearly not conducive to their work efficiency.

The phenomenon of mobbing is not well understood, especially in the environment of banks. Mobbing in banks is even less frequently examined because banks most often guard access to their employees. Additionally, any harm committed to banks' image as good employers could also spoil the reputations of banks as institutions of public trust. Naturally, it would be interesting to specify the nature of mobbing in banks. It can be suspected that the frequency of mobbing in banks will be affected by their rapid development. For the last 30 years, banks have been one of the leading enterprise types that have been heavily restructured (Baszyński, 2008; Pająk *et al.*, 2016; Voronova *et al.*, 2016; Wieczorek-Szymańska, 2013; Wyrwa, 2015). They have introduced dynamic changes, new technology, and modern ways of managing people, such as management by objectives, outsourcing, outplacement, or new training forms. Such changes probably affected the scale of mobbing because of internal pressures in the banking environment.

The main purpose of this paper is to determine the scale of mobbing in banks; in particular, we seek to investigate who is the most frequently a mobber and who is most often affected by mobbing. The following hypotheses were adopted:

1. *Superiors are more likely to be perpetrators of mobbing than employees at the same organizational structure level.*
2. *Women more often than men report that they are victims of mobbing.*

The study is part of a broader Polish-Russian research project on various employment aspects in banks in Poland and Russia. The project was implemented by the Poznań University of Economics (Poland), Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań (Poland), and Tyumen State University (Russia). The research team consisted of academics and students at the above-mentioned universities.

English and Polish literature from EBSCO, ProQuest, and Emerald databases were used to write the thesis. The methods that were used for the study were classification trees, the Mann-Whitney test, and descriptive statistics. After the initial theoretical assumptions about mobbing, arguments for and against hypotheses were analyzed. Then, the research methods used, and the research sample were described. The results obtained were analyzed, and the results were discussed.

2. Theoretical Assumptions about Mobbing

Mobbing was studied in various contexts, and researchers representing various fields: economists, management specialists, psychologists, sociologists, and others (Jędrejek, 2011). The scope of behaviors covered by mobbing may also be different. An analysis of the topic of mobbing shows that this is still a controversial concept and is internationally described as a growing and serious problem (Yuksel and Tuncsiper, 2011; Civilidag and Sargin, 2013). Each of these authors mentions a long-term harassment process that can last for months. The scope of mobbing can include many activities, including role overload, constant grievances and pointing out mistakes, unfounded criticism with a raised voice, giving contradictory orders, ignoring, isolating (Bylok, Kloc and Nowakowska-Grunt, 2015; Divincova and Sivakova, 2014; Tiyek, 2012), allocation of useless work below the employee's qualifications, a complete lack of assignment of any task, contradictory, incomprehensible instructions, and threatening or using physical force (Chakowski, 2014; Leymann, 1996). Mobbing as source of occupational stress reduces the productivity of human capital and influence quality of life and life satisfaction (Akulich, 2018; Chykhantsova, 2020; 2020a; Hrynenko and Kyryliuk, 2019; Jaźwiński, 2007; 2010).

For this paper, we assumed that mobbing is a collection of negative long-term employee-focused actions caused by another employee. Such typical actions include those most frequently indicated in the literature on the subject intentional damage or destruction of an employee's belongings, gossip and false information, offensive and provocative texts, boycotting and ignoring, concealing relevant information, verbal abuse, hostile behavior, intimidation, blowing the whistle or sexual abuse. There is descending mobbing (also known as bossing mobbing), horizontal mobbing, and the least common, upward mobbing (Bylok, Kloc and Nowakowska-Grunt, 2015; Maeran, Marcati and De Felice, 2017; Malcukov, 2018). The first research hypothesis is formulated as:

H1: Superiors are more likely to be perpetrators of mobbing than employees at the same organizational structure level.

Some factors may be conducive to becoming a mobber, creativity, go-aheadness, high qualifications, and higher education (Ostrowska, 2014; Minibas-Poussard *et al.*, 2018). Mobbers are usually intelligent and cunning people. The more intelligent a mobber is, the more he or she can harm a victim's mental and physical health (Szymik

and Brosz, 2009). These positive qualities seem to be particularly desirable when recruiting for managerial positions. Also, mobbers view themselves as being better than they really are. They are driven by jealousy and often feel that their values are threatened or not receiving adequate respect, leading to abusive behavior. One of their motivations may be striving to preserve their positions by weakening the positions of their victims. When analyzing the intensity of mobbing according to the position held, it is worth considering the supervisor and subordinate's characteristics.

It seems quite natural that because a superior has power, the mobber will tend to be a superior rather than a subordinate. Meanwhile, it can be assumed that people holding managerial positions are typically skilled and intelligent (Szymik and Brosz, 2009), creating opportunities for mobbing if they choose to use them. According to both theory and practice, mobbing often occurs when managers commit various management errors that fail to notice or react to instances of mobbing (Kamińska, 2014; Celep and Konakli, 2013). According to Szewczyk's research (2012), the factor contributing to a person becoming a mobber is higher education, which is more often typical among managers than people in non-managerial positions. Mobbers with university degrees or academic titles can mask themselves better. They are usually intelligent and calculating people. They can pursue their chosen goal at the expense of others and use their professional position to manipulate others, exploit them and intentionally worsen their well-being while maintaining an appearance of normality.

Perpetrators of mobbing often occupy high positions at work, and at the same time, they can ruin others' professional careers. They are aware of their actions and the consequences; simultaneously, they can control their own behavior (Szewczyk, 2012). Mobbers in managerial positions are so damaging because they can hide their own actions using their skills and position.

Usually, high competition favors the phenomenon of mobbing in enterprises. Regardless of the position, work becomes stressful and mentally taxing in such situations. Senior employees strive to prevent activities that may harm them in losing power or even their work. When incorrect organization occurs, several complications arise in the enterprise, such as communication errors. In this situation, senior employees often blame lower-level employees (Gocen *et al.*, 2013; Minibas-Poussard, Seckin-Celik and Baran Bingol, 2018). According to research by F. Bylok, J. Kloc, and J. Nowakowska-Grunt (2015) the most common reason for changing jobs (16.7%) was bad relations between superiors and subordinates. For 2.3% of people, the prevailing bad atmosphere at work had the greatest impact on their decision to change jobs. The authors believe that an important aspect of management is maintaining good relations between the subordinates and supervisors. It improves efficiency, mobilization, and willingness to work, which in turn results in higher profits. Conversely, bad relations between employees and supervisors may lead to mobbing (Bylok, Kloc, and Nowakowska-Grunt, 2015).

According to M. Gotowska and A. Jakubczak's studies, mobbing is most often found in supervisor-employee relationships (88%), in which the employee is usually the

victim. The remaining 12% of respondents answered that mobbing occurs between employees at similar levels. None of the respondents claimed that the mobber was a subordinate (Gotkowska and Jakubczyk, 2010).

In the study of K. Delikowska, the mobbers of more than half of her female respondents were supervisors or other people in managerial positions (51%). Co-workers constituted the second-largest group of mobbers (43.5%). The fewest women indicated that their mobber was a subordinate (5.5%). Her male respondents' results were different - most men said they were the victims of employees at similar levels in the hierarchy (70.8%), and 21.4% of men said that their perpetrators were superiors or other managers. In turn, the fewest men indicated that they were the victims of subordinates (7.8%). This choice of answers by men may mean that men are more likely to occupy managerial positions (Delikowska, 2003), and maybe it is harder for them to admit that they are victims of mobbing.

In the study by D.A. Maran, A. Varetto, M.U. Butt and C. Civilotti conducted among 34 male victims and 39 female victims, most respondents (83.6%) reported their supervisor as the perpetrator of mobbing. As the most common mobbing behavior the victim indicated was isolation and destruction of reputation (Maran *et al.*, 2019). In turn, in a study by N. Pranjić, L. Males-Bilić, A. Beganlić, and J. Mustajbegović, 76% of respondents encountered mobbing one or more times. Most responded that the mobber was a department head or supervisor (83%). Furthermore, 14% replied that the mobber was a CEO. 65% of people reported department managers and colleagues as perpetrators of mobbing. 24% of people were not exposed to mobbing (Pranjić *et al.*, 2006). Mobbers are typically dynamic, egoistic, and not very empathic people who try to defend their position regardless of the consequences. Considering that superiors may experience severe stress related to competition or the desire to make more profit, it can be assumed that their behavior may unwittingly turn into mobbing. The second research hypothesis is formulated as:

H2: Women more often than men report that they are victims of mobbing.

There are at least a few arguments why women are more likely to complain of being mobbed than men. Firstly, it is somewhat due to the traditional approach to sex and the still popular belief that it is a man who dominates a woman. Men often adopt the stereotypical attitude of the dominator and ruler, and women the attitude of submissive and dependent on men (Gayathri and Karthikeyan, 2015). Another stereotype portrays men as distant from the world and people, assertive, aggressive, and showing no sadness or fear. Thus, a man's confession of being a victim of mobbing can be viewed as a weakness. It can be concluded that men will be less likely to report that they are victims of mobbing. A study by D.A. Maran, S. Bernardelli, and A. Varetto showed that women are more prone to reporting mobbing than men; the results of these authors also confirm that women more often report that they are the actual victims of mobbing, while men consider mobbing behavior to be accidental (Tereszko and Dudek, 2017; Acquadro Maran, Bernardelli and Varetto, 2018; Acquadro Maran *et al.*, 2019). Another reason man is less likely to be victim of

mobbing is that a female victim usually receives more compassion from society than a man (Mulder, Bos, Pouwelse, and van Dam, 2017).

Secondly, women are less likely to be superiors than men. The Top Employer for Management survey found that 73% of men and only 23% of women were superiors in Polish enterprises (Nowak, 2014). In contrast, the 2011 European Commission Report shows that only 3% of board members in Europe are women (European Commission Report, 2011). In Poland, despite the decrease in unemployment and the increase in women's share on the labor market in recent years, the number of women in managerial positions and on company boards has not changed (Krysińska-Kościańska, 2018). Similar trends can also be observed in other countries (Dobrovic *et al.*, 2019). The higher the organizational structure, the more that men dominate.

These positions are also often taken by potential future mobbers; hence, men are more often mobbers due to their superior's positions, and women are more often victims and subordinates. Sometimes women are less confident than men, and they may underestimate their own abilities. Women more often find it more difficult to advance to higher positions, even if they decide not to have children (Frankovsky and Birknerova, 2017; Irime *et al.*, 2014; Kalinowska-Sufinowicz, 2013). In turn, according to T. Maidaniuc-Chiril, women, even in managerial positions, are more often threatened in the workplace than men (Maidaniuc-Chirila, 2019).

Thirdly, women are more likely to notice bullying than men because they tend to be more perceptive than men. They react faster and notice small changes in behavior. They can associate facts quickly. They also have greater touch sensitivity and are better at remembering details or random information. Women read body language, gestures, and facial expressions more efficiently. Women can capture details, signals, tone of voice, facial expressions, and then analyze their sense, which allows them to look differently at some issues, including the occurrence of mobbing (Frankovsky and Birknerova, 2017; Irime *et al.*, 2014). F. Bylok, J. Kloc, and J. Nowakowska-Grunt analyzed who most often and in what way provokes mobbers to mobbing activities. Features such as appearance, style of dress, manner of behavior has no impact on becoming a victim (39.5% "rather not"; 21.9% "definitely not"). Other respondents replied that it is women who, through their appearance, style of dress, and manner of behavior, provoke others to the mob (21.3% "rather yes"; 6.2% "definitely yes") (Bylok, Kloc, and Nowakowska-Grunt, 2015).

Vveinhardt and Streimkiene studied the occurrence of mobbing among 21 professions. 1231 respondents who experienced bullying took part in the study. Most respondents said they had experienced steadily repeated mobbing (70.4%), and 29.6% experienced single instances of mobbing behavior. 81% of women and 19% of men had experienced mobbing or individual instances of mobbing behavior (Vveinhardt and Streimkiene, 2017). There are jobs where women are more likely to be bullied. These are sectors mainly managed by men or places where women constitute most employees (Gamian-Wilk, 2018). Women are often mobbed in workplaces such as cashier, salesman, nurse, banker, and teacher. These are also

positions mainly occupied by women, where it is necessary to be persuasive, empathetic, and patient. Women also cope better in occupations in which a person needs to help others or show interest in a person's problems, e.g., as in the role of a nurse or social worker (Frankovsky and Birknerova, 2017; Leymann, 1996). Considering that there are still various forms of stereotypes about women and men and considering the results of previous studies, it can be hypothesized that women are more often victims of mobbing. Women are distinguished by features that facilitate the mobber's mobbing process.

3. Methodology

The respondents indicated various forms of mobbing present at work. On this basis, a mobbing index was calculated. It was calculated as the average response from all mobbing variants - all types of mobbing behavior (except for sexual abuse) and considering all people who could be mobbing offenders (except for clients) (Table 4). The index would be one if every employee were mobbed by everyone and in every way, and zero if no employee were mobbed in any way by anyone. Mobbing index values included the frequency of different types of mobbing and different types of mobbers (superiors, subordinates, etc.).

Mobbing occurring in banks may be analyzed using a Mann-Whitney test and classification trees. As in the case of clusters, the classification trees are built on similarities and differences. The mobbing index was assumed to be a dependent variable. In contrast, the independent variables were: variables appearing in the hypotheses (position, gender) related to the problem of mobbing (assistance from the employer in the event of mobbing), as well as metric data (country, year of survey, type of bank (commercial vs. cooperative), participation in anti-mobbing training, age, place of residence, education, type of bank, organizational unit, workplace, type of prevailing capital (domestic or foreign), professional experience at the current workplace, total experience in banks, total work experience and the number of hours actually worked in the last week, the number of days absent from work last 12 months, any degree of disability).

In the CRT (Classification and Regression Trees) method, it is assumed that the group's homogeneity is a splitting criterion. The resulting groups should be as homogeneous internally as possible (the highest within-node homogeneity possible). This method assumes that each node (set) must involve at least 50 observations.

5. Results⁵

⁵The research results presented are part of a broader study. Thus, the research method and data description also apply to the research results on other aspects of HRM and other papers by the authors. You can find more detailed data in our other papers (e.g., Davydenko et al., 2018; Kaźmierczyk, 2019; Kaźmierczyk et al., 2019; Kaźmierczyk and Chinalska, 2018; Kaźmierczyk et al., 2020; Kaźmierczyk and Żelichowska, 2017; Kaźmierczyk and Aptacy, 2016).

No institution (including the Association of Polish Banks, the National Bank of Poland, the Polish Financial Supervision Authority, the Central Statistical Office of Poland, and their Russian counterparts) has a publicly available sampling frame - a list of all bank employees in Poland or Russia. Data on the number of employees in individual territorial units (including cities) are also not available. Only residual data from reports of selected banks regarding the proportion of employment by age, sex, and education (Wieczorek-Szymańska, 2013). One publication (Kaźmierczyk, 2011) systematically reviewed all public reports and financial statements of all banks in Poland from 1990 to 2011. It contained all data obtainable from reports on the structure of employment according to metric data. Due to the lack of a sampling frame, it was impossible to carry out a random test. The only way to obtain a random sample would be to send interviewers to randomly selected bank branches in the current situation. One could poll all bank employees in Poland and Russia. Both options were not feasible due to the limited funds allocated to the study and the banks' reluctance to participate in this type of study.

An anonymous survey was employed in this study, and therefore it is not known exactly which banks the surveyed employees came from. Using a questionnaire metric, it is possible to examine the sample structure by age, seniority, education, a position held, type of bank, and compare it to the reports' mentioned data. Based on a comparison of survey metrics and report data (Kaźmierczyk and Żelichowska, 2017; Kaźmierczyk, 2011), it can be stated: their structure in Poland is convergent.

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of an introduction followed by 23 closed-ended questions and several demographic and work-related questions. The questionnaire's main part contained questions that referred to several important human-resource management areas (recruitment, forms of employment, motivation, professional education, e-learning, loyalty, stress, work efficiency, MBOs, perks, mobbing, professional careers, de-recruitment, dismissals, and outplacement). Some of the questions were used to test the research thesis. The data from the survey conducted in Poland between January 2016 and December 2019 and in Russia (the Tyumen and Sverdlovsk region) between February to April 2017 and June to September 2019 were used to test the research thesis. A snowball technique was used to collect the data. Other participants invited the survey participants. Personal contacts and individual visits to banks were used to collect the data. More than 25,000 requests in Poland and Russia, more than 4,000 queries were sent asking recipients to fill in the questionnaire via e-mail, social networking websites (such as Facebook, GoldenLine, and LinkedIn), and thematic online forums. Both electronic versions (Anonymous Study of Bank Employees, 2016) and physical copies of the questionnaire were used in the survey.

A two-stage pilot survey in Poland preceded the main survey. Firstly, the survey was conducted among a small group of participants (180 students in Poland). In the second stage of the pilot survey, the target group consisted of 100 employees from the banking sector in Poland. The aim was to reveal any inconsistencies and to examine whether the questions were easily understandable. Thanks to the pilot study, the

questionnaire was modified and improved. The survey was then translated into Russian by a group of 12 philologists, psychologists, bankers, and HRM specialists. A two-stage study in Russia was conducted among 50 students and then a group of 50 bankers. The final research sample consists of 2,357 respondents (152 electronic versions and 2,205 hard copies) in Poland and 389 respondents (only physical copies) in Russia. Table 1 provides further details regarding the sample structure.

Table 1. *Sample Structure*

Criterion		Number of individuals		Percentage	
		<i>Poland</i>	<i>Russia</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Russia</i>
Gender	Female	1,626	266	69%	68.4%
	Male	582	79	24.7%	22.9%
	No answer	149	44	6.3%	11.3%
Education	University (major in economics)	1,102	234	46.8%	60.2%
	University (other)	623	99	26.4%	25.4%
	High school (major in economics)	317	7	13.4%	1.8%
	High school (other)	232	3	9.8%	0.8%
	Vocational	4	6	0.2%	1.5%
	Elementary	2	0	0.1%	0
	No answer	77	40	3.2%	10.3%
Occupied position	Senior managerial position	53	2	2.2%	0.5%
	Middle-level managerial position	160	34	6.8%	8.7%
	Lower-level managerial position	187	28	7.9%	7.2%
	Non-managerial position	1,814	269	77%	69.2%
	No answer	143	56	6.1%	14.4%
Organisational unit	Headquarters	522	49	22.1%	12.6%
	Regional branch (PL)	504	-	21.4%	-
	Operational branch	1,238	180	52.5%	46.3%
	VSP (RU)	-	114	-	29.3%
	No answer	93	46	3.9%	11.8%
Type of bank	Commercial bank (PL)	1,598	-	67.8%	-
	Cooperative bank (PL)	639	-	27.1%	-
	No answer	120	74	5.1%	19%
	Foreign bank (RU)	-	4	-	1%
	Federal bank (RU)	-	113	-	29%
	Regional bank (RU)	-	58	-	14.9%
	Bank with state capital (RU)	-	140	-	36%

Note: In some cases, respondents only partially completed the questionnaire, which accounts for the missing answers.

Source: Authors' own computations based on the survey data.

The average age of respondents in Poland was nearly 37 years and in Russia nearly 32 years (Table 2). The average professional experience in banking in Poland was just over 12 years, and in Russia, less than 8 years, and the average total professional experience in Poland was just over 15 years and in Russia over 11 years.

Table 2. *Average age and work experience*

Criterion	Minimum		Maximum		Standard deviation		Average	
	PL	RU	PL	RU	PL	RU	PL	RU

Age	19	20	64	57	9,783	7,167	36,66	31,56
Professional experience at the current employer	0	0	43	25	9,2574	4,6919	9,733	4,754
Professional experience in banking	0	0	43	38	9,5511	5,9335	12,025	7,724
Total experience zawodowe	0	0	45	39	10,2004	7,6692	15,011	11,140

Source: Authors' own computations based on the survey data.

6. An Empirical Approach to Mobbing

The respondents rarely encountered mobbing (Table 3). In Poland, among mobbing behaviors, the most common were spreading rumors and false information (30.1%), whistleblowing (25.7%), and hiding relevant information (22.8%). In Russia, the most popular was the dissemination of rumors and false information (20.9%).

Table 3. Mobbing behaviors in Poland and Russia

	A mobbing person					
	Superior	Employees at my organizational level	Subordinate	Customer	I do not know who acted this way	There was no such behavior
Poland						
Deliberate damage or destruction to belongings	0.6% (14)	0.6% (14)	0.1% (3)	-	1.9% (45)	88.4% (2084)
Spreading rumors and false information	4.1% (96)	12.8% (302)	1% (23)	-	12.2% (288)	64.6% (1523)
Offensive and provocative texts	2.5% (60)	3.9% (92)	0.6% (13)	-	2.2% (51)	82.9% (1954)
Boycotting and ignoring someone's presence	3.4% (79)	5.8% (136)	0.7% (17)	-	1.7% (41)	80% (1886)
Hiding relevant information	8.8% (208)	7.2% (170)	1.3% (31)	-	5.5% (129)	70.8% (1669)
Verbal abuse	4.5% (106)	4.7% (110)	0.7% (16)	-	2% (47)	80.4% (1896)
Hostile behavior	6% (141)	7.3% (173)	1.2% (29)	-	2.8% (65)	75.7% (1785)
Intimidation	8.9% (210)	1.6% (37)	0.4% (10)	-	1.5% (35)	80.1% (1888)
Whistleblowing	3.2% (76)	12.4% (293)	1.3% (30)	-	8.8% (208)	67.9% (1600)
Sexual abuse	-	-	-	-	-	-
Russia						
Deliberate damage or destruction to belongings	0.3% (1)	1% (4)	0.3% (1)	0.3% (1)	0.5% (2)	84.1% (327)
Spreading rumors and false information	3.1% (12)	9.3% (36)	1.3% (5)	1.5% (6)	5.7% (22)	69.9% (272)
Offensive and provocative texts	3.9% (15)	3.3% (13)	0.8% (3)	4.6% (18)	0.5% (2)	74.6% (290)

Boycotting and ignoring someone's presence	1.5% (6)	1.8% (7)	0% (0)	0.3% (1)	0.8% (3)	81.2% (316)
Hiding relevant information	4.1% (16)	3.1% (12)	0.8% (3)	1.8% (7)	2.6% (10)	72.8% (283)
Verbal abuse	3.3% (13)	1.8% (7)	0.5% (2)	5.9% (23)	0.3% (1)	76.1% (296)
Hostile behavior	3.9% (15)	4.4% (17)	0% (0)	4.9% (19)	1% (4)	74% (288)
Intimidation	4.4% (17)	1.3% (5)	0% (0)	3.1% (12)	1% (4)	76.6% (298)
Blow the whistle	1.5% (6)	5.4% (21)	0.8% (3)	1.3% (5)	2.1% (8)	75.3% (293)
Sexual abuse	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.3% (1)	84.1% (327)

Note: The questionnaire version differed in Poland and Russia; the Polish survey did not include the points: customer and sexual abuse.

Source: Authors' own computations based on the survey data.

Employees at the same level of the organizational structure were indicated as the perpetrators of mobbing, both in Poland and Russia. In Russia, it was also reported that the banks' clients were also guilty of mobbing employees (the questionnaire in Poland did not allow the respondents to report this). The superior was indicated most frequently only in the category of hiding relevant information (in Poland 8.8%, in Russia 4.1%) and intimidation (in Poland 8.9%, in Russia 4.4%). Subordinates were seldom indicated as perpetrators of mobbing.

According to the index, the differences between a supervisor and a colleague at the same level of the organization were smaller than in the case of simple indications of the perpetrator (Tables 3 and 4). Nevertheless, the hypothesis that mobbers are most often superiors was not confirmed. In Poland and Russia, the most likely perpetrator of mobbing was an employee at the same level of the organization (index PL M = 0.08, RU = 0.05), and the least likely perpetrator was a subordinate (PL = RU: M = 0.01).

Table 4. Mobbing indexes in Poland and Russia

	Superior	Employee at my organizational level	Subordinate	Customer	I do not know who acted this way	There was no such behavior
Poland						
M	0.06	0.08	0.01	-	0.05	0.81
SD	0.18	0.19	0.07	-	0.13	0.29
S	3.61	3.16	10.03	-	4.33	-1.62
SE S	0.05	0.05	0.05	-	0.05	0.05
K	13.86	10.80	119.38	-	23.94	1.00
SE K	0.10	0.10	0.10	-	0.10	0.10
Russia						
M	0.04	0.05	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.85
SD	0.16	0.16	0.04	0.14	0.12	0.28
S	4.52	4.02	8.05	5.06	6.85	-2.04

SE S	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13
K	20.92	17.93	75.08	28.83	51.12	3.07
SE K	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26
U Mann-Whitney test (Poland – Russia)						
U Mann-Whitney	367910.5	367551.5	395987	-	347677	354848
W Wilcoxon	430391.5	430032.5	458468	-	410158	2918828
z	-3.56	-3.25	-0.81	-	-5.64	-3.70
p	0.000	0.001	0.415	-	0.000	0.000
Effect Size	7.94%	8.02%	-	-	13.06%	11.15%

Note: The index included all types of mobbing, except for sexual abuse, because originally the questionnaire in Poland did not contain this type of mobbing. The inclusion of sexual abuse in the mobbing index could affect the results and the comparison of Poland and Russia would be imprecise. *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, *S* – skewness, *SES* – absolute skewness error, *K* – kurtosis, *SEK* – absolute kurtosis error. The effect size was calculated by Glass's two-series correlation coefficient.

Source: Authors' computations based on the survey data.

The differences between the mobbing index values in Poland and Russia were statistically significant (low effect size) for all types of mobbers, excluding subordinates (Table 4). The biggest significant differences were variants such as "I don't know who behaved like this" and "there was no such behavior." Employees in Poland almost twice as often as in Russia indicated that they do not know who behaved in this way (0.03 versus 0.05). In turn, in Russia, employees more often indicated no such behavior (0.85 versus 0.81). The difference between women and men was (weakly) statistically significant in Poland ($U = 417237$, $p < 0.05$) and not significant in the case of Russia. Thus, the hypothesis that women more often than men report that they are victims of mobbing was not confirmed. On the contrary, in Poland's case, it was men that slightly more often reported the occurrence of mobbing at their work.

Table 5. Gender and mobbing in banks in Poland and Russia

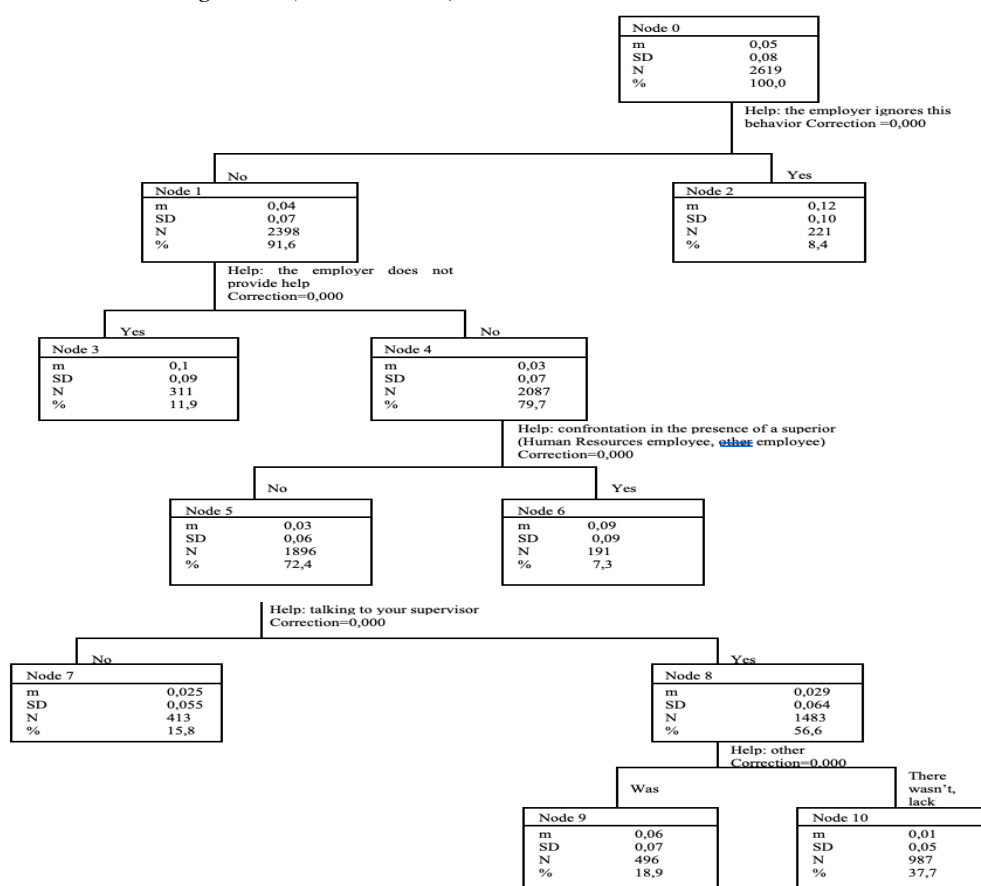
Index mobbing	Woman	Man	Significance test of differences (Mann-Whitney)	
Poland				
M	0.0484	0.0561	Mann-Whitney	417237
SD	0.0794	0.0278	Wilcox	1642632
S	2.834	0.0828	z	-2.218
SE S	0.062	1.823	p	0.027
K	16.589	0.103	Effect Size	5.79
SE K	0.124	0.205	-	
Russia				
M	0.0336	0.0358	Mann-Whitney	8893.5
SD	0.0630	0.0663	Wilcox	39274.5
S	2.158	2.102	z	-0.345
SE S	0.155	0.279	p	0.730
K	3.895	3.491	Effect Size	-
SE K	0.309	0.552	-	

Note: *M* – mean, *SD* – standard deviation, *S* – skewness, *SES* – skew absolute error, *K* – kurtosis, *SEK* – kurtosis absolute error. Effect size was calculated by Glass's two-series correlation coefficient.

Source: Own study based on survey data.

Considering the CRT method presented in Figure 1, it can be stated that the most important factor that differentiated the level of mobbing was the employer's ignoring of mobbing. Employees who confirmed that such ignoring by their supervisor existed three times more often admitted to being a mobbing victim (0.12 versus 0.04). It can be suspected that employees' uncontrolled negative behavior can lead to a lot of conflicts, which may later turn into mobbing (Rucińska and Szmurło, 2014, p. 302). A person's place in the organizational hierarchy and their gender turned out to be irrelevant for the level of mobbing measured by the mobbing index.

Figure 1. Decision tree, level of mobbing among bank employees in Poland and in Russia – mobbing index (CRT method)



Note: in the CRT method, the country was not a factor differentiating the level of mobbing, which is why the scheme covers both Poland and Russia. The higher the criterion is, the more significant it was for the level of mobbing.

Source: Own calculations based on survey data.

7. Discussion

The results obtained in this study are surprising. The first hypothesis assumed that a mobber is more likely to be superior to a colleague of equal status. The hypothesis was not confirmed because an employee at a similar organizational structure was confirmed to most often be a mobbing perpetrator. In Russia, respondents also frequently reported clients as being mobbers (the survey questionnaire in Poland did not include such a variant of the answer). It can be assumed that some customers may be impatient when not receiving satisfactory service. However, an employee's indication at the same level of the organizational structure may result from a sense of competition or jealousy on the perpetrator's part. Mobbing preparators may strive to maintain their positions or even seek a promotion at other colleagues' expense.

Perhaps mobbing on the part of superiors is indeed a phenomenon rarely found in banks that secure themselves with appropriate procedures. There is also a question about the definition of mobbing and knowledge of this issue among the respondents. One could suspect that it was the inability to classify a given behavior as mobbing that determined mobbing results on the supervisor's part. However, the questionnaire asked directly about a specific behavior. Hence it is unlikely that the respondents did not know what behavior to classify as mobbing. Perhaps the effective organizational culture that prevails in banks and their corporate nature leads bankers to indicate that people at their level are more often likely to perpetrate mobbing as the managerial system would not tolerate vertical mobbing. This would give much ground for further research on the effectiveness of anti-mobbing management and its tools. Slightly more information was provided by the data of the created mobbing index. Some enterprises (such as banks) may implement mobbing training and procedures, limiting the mobbing scale. Perhaps such a process of awareness building primarily affects managers, and as leaders, they are the first to limit their mobbing behavior. The issue of anti-mobbing training conducted by employers requires further analysis. Banks may be leaders in this field.

The literature assumes that mobbers are often characterized by creativity, pugnacity, high qualifications, and higher education (Ostrowska, 2014, p. 104; Minibus-Poussard and others, 2018, p. 474). Meanwhile, these are qualities required by many bank employees, including non-managerial ones. Most bank employees have a university degree. Banks have undergone both a stage of pressure from recruiters and managers to increase education and mass training (Baszyński, 2008; Kaźmierczyk, 2011). The nature of the training has changed, and it is now geared to increasing efficiency and sales results; however, in general, bank employees are often well trained. This suggests that the differences between subordinates and superiors in education or training are not meaningfully significant.

The second hypothesis was that women than men more often experienced mobbing. The hypothesis was also not confirmed. On the contrary, Poland's mobbing index for men was about 16% higher than for women (0.0484 versus 0.0561). It can be assumed that men cope worse with criticism or a lack of appreciation. Men may be more often

affected by mobbing because just as women sometimes feel anger, men are more likely to show it. It was also suspected that the position taken would be a mediating variable between gender and mobbing reporting. However, it turned out that according to the CRT method, both the position and gender were irrelevant to the frequency of mobbing reporting. The impact of a high percentage of women working in banks remains open for further research. Women constitute about 70% of all employees in banks.

This study's contribution to the literature mostly aptly relates to mobbing analysis in one of the market segments most reluctant to research, i.e., in banks. Banks are very reluctant to undertake any research cooperation. The obtained results shed new light on who is being mobbed in general and who is being mobbed in financial institutions. It can be expected that there are statistical islands on the labor market that are characterized by a lack of mobbing or completely different mobbing features than the average case for the entire labor market. It cannot be said that mobbing does not occur in banks, but it differs from mobbing in other enterprises. As a next step, it would be necessary to carry out similar research in other enterprises and institutions to compare and capture its specificity in various types of enterprises.

The contribution of this paper is also to propose a mobbing index, which considers not only the frequency of mobbing but also its quality aspects, i.e., the various types of mobbing. The situation is different when considering a cluster of mobbing types by a relatively small group of mobbers and when a larger number of employees engage in mobbing in a limited way. Both situations can have dramatic consequences, but they are completely different qualitatively, and both create a field for further research. It would be worth comparing the intensity and diversity of mobbing with its consequences in the form of increased stress levels or job insecurity. In this way, one could determine what type of mobbing has the worst consequences.

The study that was carried out was based on the anonymous but subjective opinions of employees who talked about being mobbed. However, assessments of superiors and their assessments of the situation were not included. Superiors did speak in the survey, but they responded as employees, not as superiors. Only the point of view of employees, not superiors, was considered. The opinions may be viewed as subjective, sometimes extreme, overstated, or understated. Simultaneously, there is no other way to study mobbing because it is a sensitive issue, as evidenced by the small number of studies devoted to it.

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